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ABSTRACT

The hypothesis presented in this paper is that there is a clear and powerful trend in U.S. higher education in the direction of people for education rather than education for people; that this trend has reached the point of actually redefining the operational notion of education and people; that it applies to both students and faculty; and that it is currently the dominant trend in U.S. higher education. Further, the hypothesis of bureaucratization of higher education is explained in detail, with emphasis on its structural origins and its implications for the future of higher education. (Author/HS)

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FROM EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE TO PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

The rise of the bureaucratic planning system in higher education

Revised

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Introduction

The hypothesis which I will present in this paper is that there is a clear and powerful trend in U.S. higher education in the direction of people for education rather than education for people; that this trend has reached the point of actually redefining the operational notion of education and "people"; that it applies to both students and faculty; and that it is currently the dominant trend in U.S. higher education.

This paper is based on four sets of data: those collected for the study of planning in U.S. higher education funded by the Danforth Foundation[1], ten years of observation of the development of Monteith College and Wayne State University in the context of Michigan Higher Education, a general reading in the vast literature on higher education in the U.S.[2], coupled with extensive discussions with colleagues in other U.S. institutions of higher learning, and a number of cases related to Monteith College[3].

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1. Otto Feinstein, Higher Education in the United States: Economics, Personalism, Quality, (D.C. Heath: Lexington Mass.) 1971.

2. I would like to mention three specific sources:

   Frank Newman (et al.), Report on Higher Education for the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, (H.E.W.: Washington D.C.) 1971.

   Harold L. Hodgkinson, Institutions in Transition: A Profile of Change in Higher Education, (McGraw-Hill, N.Y.) 1971.

   U.S. Office of Education, Education Directory, Part III, Higher Education published annually;(Washington D.C.)

3. The Latino program, the Labor School graduates, democratic decision making on the departmental level, Ethnic Studies, etc.

The new structure of higher education

In this section of the paper I will present, in some greater detail, the hypothesis of bureaucratization of higher education, its structural origins, and its implications.

Max Weber, in his classic The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, described the transition from traditional to modern society by means of ideal type mentalities. The protestant ethic was an intermediary type between traditional and rational man. While work was sacred, behavior connected with it was functional. The spirit of capitalism was totally functional, since work was no longer sacred but was replaced by a rational, functional, goal. Weber was well aware of the growth of bureaucracy and its foundation in modern rationality. Our observations of higher education in the U.S. indicate that we left the spirit of capitalism long ago and are now with the functional rationality of bureaucracy. This implies a change in the behavioral definition of education and a disappearance of the concept of person and self from that definition. This is a finding of major importance.

Our study, Higher Education in the U.S., identified a pattern which emerged from th three basic questions which we put to the data:

1. The description of the structure and dynamics of the resource allocation process currently developing in U.S. higher education;

2. Finding the assumptions regarding the nature of education, its quality, and the role of the person within that process, and the consequences of these assumptions for our system of higher education; and

3. The recommendation of a specific process of interaction among educators, planners, students, and legislators, which would result in an educationally sound alternative to the current credit-hour system.

The pattern which emerged was what sociologists have called the iron law of oligarchy; i.e. a structure is created for a specific social goal -- in this case public higher education -- but once operational, the system no l/nger functions on the basis of this social goal, but rather on the basis of the role relations inherent in the structure and for the survival and expansion of the structure. This pattern was clearly evident in the state planning systems for higher education, the operation of the statewide political bodies, and at the administrative levels of the university. The language of the system, as it emerged from the hundreds of documents and interviews, was the credit-hour. There was no discussion of educational criteria or of the human factor within the planning process. What were we seeing ?

Over the past twenty years a n ew structure of higher education had evolved in the United States. This evolution as apparent in all states of the union and had occured by a series of six steps.

The first step was usually a report on higher education for the given state; generally prepared by a "Blue Ribbon" Commission. This report set the basic outlines for the new structure. It Viewed higher education as a statewide phenomenon (based on the source of the funding - the state legislature) and dealt primarily with projections of increased enrollments distributed over the various higher education institutions in the state, and related costs. Discussion of educational goals was avoided; and there was no

effort to include psychological, social, economic, or political knowledge about the process of learning into the planning. With the exception of the Hawaii state plan, no mention was even made of these factors. The central aim of these reports was the firm establishment of the concept of higher eddcation as a statewide phenomenon, particularly in regard to fund allocation. The ground was set for step two.

Step two was the establishment, or where it already existed, the redefinition of a statwide higher education bureaucracy with the charge of implementing the "Blue Ribbon" report and to continue its supervision on a day to day basis. Institutions of higher education were now responsible to the state agency at least as far as providing information was concerned. Step three in the structural consolidation of higher education was the conscious elaboration of defined roles for each institution, a functional division of labor among the various institutions -- the University, the four year college, the community college. This structure was made functional by the way in which the state legislature was to appropriate funds. The expansionist mood of the time, based on massive increase in enrollment and state funding, meant that if institutions accepted their prescribed role in the new system they would have funds for expansion. Structural consolidation on a statewide basis was thus comparatively frictionless, as it meant institutional growth for all. Out of this process arose what has been called the three-tier higher education pyramid -- University, four year college, community college.

Step four, was the evolution of a centralized accounting system based on the credit-hour, as the measure for educational cost, and a parallel accounting system based on square foot per

student place cost, for capital outlays. Credit hours were already in wide educational use, as students had been accumulating them in order to graduate; and the federal government, and even some private foundations, required some internal accounting system if the institution was to get outside funding. But with the evolution of the state-wide system of higher education, the credit hour achieved the status of language or code within the system. While even the originators of this system warned against unqualified use of the credit-hour for inter-institutional or inter-disciplinary comparisons, it was clear that the credit-hour would be the language of the system. People complained that it was impossible to measure learning by credit-hours, and that a professor could not break up his time in relation to credit-hour production; but as the state higher education bureaucracy, the central administration of the individual institutions, and the legislature wanted information in this language, it was by-and-large adopted. The language was tied to a weighting system related to the role of the institution in the state higher education pyramid and assumptions within institutions concerning graduate vs. under-graduate costs. Some warned that the development of such a calculus meant a redefinition of education, and that at some point it would be the accounting system which would operationally be considered as the education process. But since the use of the code was reinforced by a reward system, i.e. funds for institutional expansion, use of the code was not seen as restrictive, but at worst pragmatic, and opposition as ill-advised. After all, didn't the state have the right to have such information ? At this stage of its use, it generally avoided conflicts about educational goals and values, and minimized inter and intra institutional struggles. Efficiency could now be measured by cost per credit hour, rather than by any

educational output, but this was rarely done in practice.

The next two steps brought the new system to full life. Step five operationalized the accounting system by introducing the notion of cost and allocation formulas (either formal or informal). This greatly simplified decision making and reduced potential conflicts between institutions and departments. It also indicated, to any institutional analysts who were looking, that the system was in place and operating. Step six is the current reality of the introduction of program budgeting at all levels of the system.[4] In many states the preference is for program budgeting starting with a zero dollar sum. This means that traditional assumptions regarding allocations must be defended as no allocation is to be taken for granted. This last step, appropriately enough, is being introduced at a time of great financial stress in public higher education, and in a period of general economic decline.[5] One could say that the system was bought at a time of prosperty for all who bought it, but now that it has been bought, the scarcity of resources will give the system the power to squeeze out the inconsistencies whihh were left unchallanged. Nothing is sacred, nothing is to be taken for

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4. This budgeting system is one of the famous "spin-offs" from the defense industry. The concept was developed to its present level in the Pentagon and interestingly enough, the Pentagon man who developed it is now president of the University of California. California was the prototype for the development of the new structure in higher education. The role of war and planning within war institutions has been critical for the entire development of bureaucratic planning.

5. The general decline in the economy, and its affect on all kinds of public funding, created the surplus of Ph.D.'s, teachers, and scientific personnel. Surplus does not mean that there is no social need for for this personnel, but that there just is no money to pay it. The shortage of funds for research is a similar factor.

granted. The system of pure reason is at hand. Ancient assumptions and traditions, even at the University, are now to be brought into the light of rational "scientific inquiry". The new system is now in place. But even for those of us who are scientific rationalists in our own affairs, three questions come up: Who will decide what is rational; which goal and which process is to be preferred ? What code of communication or language will need no translation within the system ? What is the consequence of not having equal amounts of knowledge about the different aspects of the educational process ?

Implications of the new structure

Who will decide what is rational; which goal and which process is to be preferred ? A quick thought about the new structure, which is presented above, and our own experiences, should suffice. Professors are now in the position (or role) of having to justify their actions to their institutional administrators, who in turn must justify them to the state legislative and bureaucratic agencies. The concept of a community of scholars[6] and the related principle of academic freedom have been structurally redefined. It is no longer a decision made on the basis of a group's experience with reality and relation with each other, a decision which must be balanced against given resources; but it is a recommendation made to a group of people who have a totally different day to day experience, and who themselves use

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6. This is not to say that the previous system was a golden age, or that justic and truth prevailed without politics. All I wish to say is that those for whom justifications have to be made have changed from senior professors to intermediary bureaucrats.

the recommendation in their relation with another group of people with yet another totally different set of day to day experiences and relations.

The preferred process and goal will be that which can serve best in the relation between these three groups - the professor, the administrator at the institution, and the bureaucrat and legislator at the state level. The weakest group in this system is that group which has to actually carry out the educational work, am namely the professors. What they have to say is at best a recommendation to the other two groups, who hold the real power, and in effect define the process and the goals.

What code or language will need no translation within the system ? The answer should also be immediately apparent from the description of the new system of higher education. Credit-hour and credit-hour costs are the lingua franca of the system; and to challange the language implies a challange to the system as a whole. Inherent in the credit-hour calculus is the notion of educational efficiency based on a comparison of credit-hour costs. There is at the present time no other generally accepted measure for educational efficiency. Thus an attack on the credit-hour is in effect an attack on the notion of efficiency in production, or seen from another angle, support for waste due to traditional rather than rational preferences. Since both university administrator and state legislator are charged with overseeing efficient use of resources the trend towards increasing use of the credit-hour as code or language is inherent to the structure of the system and the allocation of power.

The definition of student as a composite of credit hours weighted by grades (if the student can pay tuition), and of the professor as one of the costs of credit hour production, is inherent in the language or calculus of the system. The student is no longer a person learning, and the professor a person teaching what he or she knows. The concept person has been lost in the translation and what remains is the limited role in the production of credit-hours. The production of credit-hours is the education process.

Now, everyone who works within this system will tell you that they are familiar with this problem, and that they do not make judgements in that way; but we as social scientists should have something to say about this. What we, in effect, observe is that this system only works by making exceptions, in order to accomodate to reality, rather than that the system is a rough correlate to reality which occasionally has to make exceptions. This condition derives from the fact that we have adopted a language which measures efficiency of a production process without ever having defined what the product should be, or is. The professor whose function is to produce credit-hours as well as education must continuously ask for excpetions to the notion of educational efficiency which arises from credit-hour comparisons. If the professor sees the need for change inorder to accomplish an educational goal, she or he must petition administrators and appeal to some values outside of the credit-hour calculus. This means that the petitioner for education is guilty before proven innocent, and that a form of bureaucratic patron-client system is inherent if the general system is to werk. The functioning of patron-client relations, under conditions where traditional mutual obligations are no longer in

force, is well known to social scientists.

What is the consequence of not having equal amounts of knowledge about the different aspects of the educational process ? As social scientists we know that there are different kinds of people, and in many cases we know quite a bit about them. We also know quite a bit about the sociology and psychology of learning and scientific inquiry. We even have sound inforamtion about the economics and politics of higher education. But this knowledge is no where included in the credit-hour language and pales in comparison to the data banks of credit hours, faculty loads, and square foot per student place costs. It is not only that we have not translated our findings into this bureaucratic language; nor that those who might hear such translations and have the power to act upon them are not us; but it is that our knowledge, while more relevant and real, is also less quantifiable and less certain about its truth. That makes it, even leaving aside problems of translation and who the decision makers are, less effective in institutional power struggles, where language must be brief and certain. But this might be overcome, if we ourselves did not have superstitious beliefs in efficiency[7] and magic numbers and formulae. It is, after all, a political question of who makes the decisions and what language they will be made in.

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7. The key value supporting the credit-hour system is rationality as opposed to traditional wisdom. Central to rationality is efficiency, in this case in efficiency of resource allocation. Yet there have been very few studies concerning the efficiency of learning in relation to credit-hour costs. It could be that the lowest credit-hour cost leads to negative learning (i.e. increase in ignorance). There is in effect some data to prove this, but if the output of education is in many ways beyond measurability, how can we talk of efficiency?

The implications of this new structure seem clear. Higher Education has been behaviorally redefined; this redefinition is clearly in bureaucratic planning terms; the person inherent to the concept of student and professor has been lost by this redefinition[8]; educational considerations can only be made by asking for exceptions, by arguing in terms outside of the system-language; the internal relations are thus patron-client relations; the consequences are people for education rather than education for people.

Some comments on the cases presented

The founding of Monteith itself[9], the Afro-American Experience course, the effort of establishing a social science research institute, the experience of the Center for the Teaching of Peace and War, the efforts of getting some programs in relations to women's needs, the idea of a higher educational relation to the local model cities project, institutional reactions to our nationally known Conference of Detroit's Ethnic Communities, our experience with American Indian workshops, all substantiate our basic of people for education as the current reality of the system; but time does not permit the presentation of this data and its analysis. I will therefore

8. The credit-hour long ago depersonalized the student. Program budgeting will depersonalize the professor. The faculty role has changed from a person living in a special kind of community, to a role in the production process of credit-hours and research papers. It is not surprising that in this context traditional concepts of tenure, sabbatical, professional (rather than employee) status, are all under attack, as is the notion of decision making at the colleaguial level. These, in the new system, are all anachronistic, dysfunctional, and inefficient.

9. David Riesman, Joseph Gusfield and Zelda Gamson, Academic Values and Mass Education: The early years of Oakland and Monteith, Doubleday 1970.

limit myself to relating my paper to the other papers -- the Latino en Marcha and Labor Graduates in particular -- and some comments on democratization of departmental decision making.

These cases all show that educational objectives which are formal goals of educational institutions can only be reached, if reached at all, by special circumstance and as exceptions to the normal functioning of the institution. Critical to the possibility of establishing these two projects was the existence of Monteith College, and within it inter-disciplinary divisions based on the common tasks of preparing and teaching a common five quarter course, as well as the social origins and composition of the staff. Monteith's existence within Wayne State University made exceptions possible if the Dean agreed. The personal relations resulting from the staff taught, inter-disciplinary course, and the social origins of the staff created the internal conditions at Monteith which made it possible for these projects to be inside an existing part of the University. These conditions, while necessary, where not sufficient, to assure acceptance of these courdes.Three other conditions had to prevail: a need by Monteith itself for people for education (it looked as though enrollments were down, thus some source for students was needed); no internal funding was needed -- in the case of Latino en Marcha funds came from New Detroit Inc. [10] and Labor Graduates cost no additional resources and paid their

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10. Yet tne program was nearly blocked because students needed financial support for tuition and expenses. While a small amount of actual money was indeed needed, if one wanted the students to attend College full time - funds which eventually came from Federal sources - the grant from New Detroit Inc. covered instructional costs, but for some internal accounting reasons, the University was unwilling to waive tuition.

own tuition;[11] finally, the time was ripe for these programs as both groups had both political power and legitemacy in relation to their educational needs.[12]

The existence of the six factors mentioned above were still not sufficient for the automatic functioning of the system. At each stage in the development of these projects vast amounts of time and personal energy (none of which would be counted in the Program Budgeting procedure) had to be expended. But in the process of this entrepreneurship, the power relations became crystal clear. Faculty were at best petitioners, certainly not decision makers. Nor would a decision favorable to the petition be made unless all elements mentioned above were present. The ideology of the bureaucrats also became clear. We had to translate people into social-economic catagories if we wished to be understood at all; and the idea that people with different experiences and relations might need different educational environments -- environments which were not self evident before you knew who the specific people were -- seemed most difficult to translate. After a while, administrators would stop arguing with our point of view that group solidarity, based on common past experience and common current educational tasks, was critical in the learning process for certain people; at that point they would ask " These students

11. If we had had the students' tuition payments in the form of a grant many of the problems relating to the survival and development of the Labor Graduates project would not have and would not now exist. In other words, the form of the funding is critical. Had the student pooled their tuition payments into a grant they would have had far more power, than by paying tuition individually.

12. The fact that in a Labor town like Detroit (400,000 union members in the Metropolitan Area) there is little institutional support for the idea that higher education should do something for the working man is one of the weak points in getting the project accepted by the University. On the other hand, 1971 was the year when bureaucracies thought that the time for the Chicano had come.

won't stay in these special sections[13] for more than their first year will they ? I mean, you aren't for keeping them segregated, are you ?"

The combination of the liberal universalistic abstractions of the bureaucrats with their bureaucratic modus-operandi would have made these projects beyond the pale, if Monteith had not had the autonomy within the general institutional structure it had, and had the other factors previously mentioned been absent. These projects were indeed exceptions to the day to day functioning of the system, thus supporting my hypothesis. The likelihood of raising admission standards[14] at Wayne State University, and the taking away of the limited traditional right of a college to decide admission criteria, will make the future introduction of such projects nearly impossible. The fact that these projects developed at all makes Wayne State University one of the more open institutions in higher education.

I would now like to add some data about departmental decision making and the democratic process. It is my belief that the system of people for education has resulted in what Bob Thomas calls a neo-colonial structure, if we assume that the faculty was indeed a community of scholars at some point in the past; an assumption

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13. As indicated in the other papers, the Monteith basic courses all have small discussion groups (12 students per section in the freshman year). In order to use the educational advantage of group solidarity, the Labor School Graduates and the Chicano students, while attending common lectures with all students, had their own discussion groups. They were not forced to stay in these groups.

14. In both prpgrams students were admitted on the basis of recommendation rather than high school records or test scores. The so-called decline of admissions standards at W.S.U. resulted from the fact that at one point Wayne needed people for education if it was to be one of the major state Universities and thus improve its relation to the budget formula.

which is still made by the formal statements about the University. The critical element in Thomas' view of colonial structures[15] is that they deprive people of experience by standing between them and the reality with which they must deal; i.e. instead of dealing with each other and the environment the colonised must go through structures set up by and controlled by other people with ohter experiences and interests. As the people begin to loose this experience of dealing directly with each other, their environment, and their goals, a specific pathology sets in. It seems to me that this concept fits the academic situation very well. All powerholders are considered agents of the Central Bureaucracy by its top administrators, who in turn are seen as agents of the trustees. Even Department chairmen are being defined as management when push came to shove and faculty unionization came on the scene.[16] While maintaining the rhetoric of faculty primacy in educational matters (curriculum and personnel), the faculty are generally petitioners to some higher authority if they wish to have their decisions in these areas enacted. This is not to say that faculty have no power (Simmel pointed out that even an absolute authoritarian relation is reciprocal), but that the balance of power over time has shifted into other people's

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15. This definition of colonialism was developed by Robert K. Thomas "Colonialism: Classic and Internal", New University Thought, Volume IV, Number 4, 1967.

16. Unionization in higher education is obviously the result of and part of the process of bureaucratization and redefinition of the role of professor. Had to role not already been redefined by experience, there would be no support for unionization. The Michigan Employment Relations Commission, at the request of the attorney for W.S.U. ruled that Department chairmen are part of management and thus not elligible to vote in collective bargaining.

hands. The less liberal administrators are fairly clear about this, but they are few. The liberal administrators, and many who pose as academic traditionalists, claim their allegiance to faculty primacy in curricular and personnel matters, but indicate that university-wide faculty patticipation is the right way to do this. A close scientific investigation of the consequences of this view in the context of the multi-versity indicates that when the decision making unit is not equivalent to the unit which has the work task, the functioning personal relations, or the same experience, it relies more and more on administrative intervention for decision making, as the faculty becomes a status-quo veto group.

In this context the notion democracy takes on the same type of unrealistic abstract meaning as the word people has done where bureaucrats rule in the name of the people over their employees and clients, who in that context loose their quality as people since they Only have their own interests in mind, rather than those of the people. I mention this development as additional evidence for my hypothesis. In our situation it was never sufficient that the relevant faculty group favored these programs, while we could easily have vetoed the programs, we could do little more than not veto them as our contribution to getting them accepted. The decisions were made at other levels. The development of university statutes concerning new programs, institute and centers, tenure, budgeting etc. all clearly move in the direction of greater centralization of decision making, and centralization in the hands of administrators.

Some general implications

The growth of internal bureaucratization and its impact on Higher Education, as a national phenomenon, is the central theme of

the 1971 Report on Higher Education:[17]

> "As we examined the growth of higher education in the post-war period, we have seen disturbing trends towards uniformity in our institutions, growing bureaucracy, overemphasis on academic credentials, isolation of students and faculty from the world -- a growing rigidity and uniformity of structure that makes higher education reflect less and less the interest of Society."

It seems to us that these consequences flow from the evolution of the system of higher education as put forward in our hypothesis. The chapter headings of this very important report indicate some of the key educational implications of this trend: the Paradox of Access, the Lockstep, Educational Apartheid, the Homogenization of Learning, the Growth of Bureaucracy, the Illegitemacy of Cost Effectiveness, the Inner-Direction of Graduate Studies, the Credentials Monopoly, the Unfinished Experiment in Minority Education, Barriers to Women, Everybody's Answer: the Community College, Changing Course.

Another consequence of the evolution is the growing distance between the elite institutions and the institutions servicing the mass of students. While enrollment has increased tremendously, the number of institutions,with the exception of community colleges, has remained comparatively constant, leading to the vast expansion of each unit, and the resultant growth of internal bureaucracy. Enrollment in the elite institutions has remained fairly constant and the status of those who don't make it into college has greatly diminished. The system has thus grown in such a manner as to foster institutional elitism and greater social barriers for those who don't come in.

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17. Frank Newman et al. Report on Higher Education to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, (Washington D.C.:March 1971), p.iii.

Some concluding comments

I think the evidence is sufficient to support my hypothesis. It is, however, important to see it as a trend rather than as a total reality; and to keep on testing it. There are countervailing trends which may at some point alter the course of events. At this time the hypothesis does explain much of what is actually going on.

Institutions of higher learning have become the locus for identity formation of a significant portion of American youth. They are, therefore, a major force in the socialization process. As personal relations around the learning process are replaced by structural part-roles, the type of human being created will reflect the quality of these relations and experiences. The institutions thus select and train people for the bureaucratic planning world. As the old elite institutions created the elite types for the feudal or market system, the new institutional arrangements will socialize young people for the various status levels of the bureaucratic planning society. These relations also characterize the environment in which knowledge is produced, thus the type of knowldge and how much of the social consequences of that knowldge that is taken into account. Time and space do not permit a further development of this aspect of the hypothesis, but it is sufficient to conclude that the type of social relations and experience fostered by the institutional structure will be reflected in the people and in the science which these institutions produce.

It is my personal fear that this system will produce non-people and a non-science; and that aside from the question of physical survival, the question of bureaucartization and its consequences are now central for 20th Century humanity.

Our case studies have shown that some countervailing trends are possible -- under exceptional circumstances -- and that knowledge, logic, and power, combined with will can have some impact. The situation is thus not hopeless or immune to the effects of action, but it is most grave. Most of our colleagues basically agree with the notion of efficiency, planning, and representative government, but have a hard time distinguishing the real from the false product. The stablishment committees and commissions -- like the Carnegie Commission -- like to avoid the basic issues of power[18], and while making important observations have rather limited suggestions.

Scientific inquiry into these questions is most important. The entire notion of efficiency could be destroyed by a study of what is considered efficient credit hour production. I would argue that a series of such studies would show that what is considered the most efficient method by this credit hour calculus , is actually the least efficient -- and may, in effect result in the waste of the resources committed by it. A few such pioneering studies have shown that the most "efficient" credit hour actually resulted in the production of ignorance rather than knowledge.[19]

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18. The power taboo is critical to bureaucartic society, it is equivalent to the sex taboo for a society based on kin relations, for the relation which is taboo is the basic relation of the given society.

19. People who took these courses knew less in the given subject area than those who had never taken the subject at all.

Scientific inquiry is not sufficient. We must also use our knowledge and insights to devise new forms of action which can be effective in the present setting and can create a powerful counter tendency to the trends which threaten to turn out human beings that are not people.

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